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a layer of ice and snow with the exception of a few mountain peaks.

Mr. Dall, in an elaborate paper on the hydrology of Behring Sea, in *Petermann's Mittheilungen*, concludes that the warm surface water which enters the Polar Sea through Behring Strait is, at most, capable of melting 5100 square inches of ice, and that its influence is consequently insignificant. No branch of the Kuro Siwo enters the Behring Sea, and the currents in the Polar basin to the north of it, are mainly dependent upon the winds. There is no reason to suppose that these drift currents are capable of opening passages through the pack-ice which would enable exploring vessels to reach the Pole or even a very high latitude.

The British Government are considering a plan for the establishment of a meteorological station at Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, to be conducted on the system adopted by the International Polar Conference.

Lake Onega may be considered to mark the natural boundary between Northern Russia and Finland, as regards their geological structure, topographical features, fauna and flora.

MICROSCOPY.[1]

THE ACME MICROSCOPES.—These really excellent instruments, combining good workmanship with moderate cost, and built upon a model which comprises many of the most convenient and serviceable of recent improvements in the construction of stands, have passed into the hands of James W. Queen & Co., of Philadelphia, who will act as business agents for their sale, and whose great business facilities cannot fail to secure for them a more general and adequate appreciation and attention than they have yet received. A "No. 4" stand, simpler and smaller than those formerly made, and a "lithological," specially adapted to the examination of rocks, are among the recent additions to the Acme series.

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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— A French naval doctor, M. Crevaux, has lately made important explorations in the northern parts of South America, more especially in the valley of the Orinoco and its affluents. Among other facts of observation, he states that the Guaraunos, at the delta of that river, take refuge in the trees when the delta is inundated. There they make a sort of dwelling with branches and clay. The women light, on a small piece of floor, the fire needed for cooking, and the traveler on the river by night often sees with surprise long rows of flames at a considerable height in the air. The Guaraunos dispose of their dead by hanging them in hammocks in the tops of trees. Dr. Crevaux, in the course of his travels, met with geophagous, or earth-eating tribes. The clay, which often serves for their food whole months, seems to be a mixture of oxide of iron and some organic substances. They have recourse to it more especially in times of scarcity; but, strange to say, there are eager gourmands for the substance, individuals in whom the depraved taste becomes so pronounced, that they may be seen tearing pieces of ferruginous clay from huts made of it, and putting them in their mouths.

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[1] This department is edited by Dr. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.

— Wasps are such an obstacle in the way of English fruit growers that one of them, Mr. William Taylor, thinks it worth while to pay three pence each for queens. And this season he bought and destroyed no less than 1192; about 230 nests have been annihilated within a mile of his premises, and still there is enough left for seed. He declares that the price named is not too high, "since it takes considerable skill to catch them," and because of their enormous fecundity, of which he says in the *Cottage Gardener:* "Understand that every wasp seen before the middle of June is a queen, and liable to have a nest of 10,000 at least. I lately estimated the number of cells in a rather large nest, and made out 9000 of them. A great many of the young had flown, and fresh eggs were laid in their places, and I have reason to believe that there is often more than one succession of young insects from the same cells, therefore 10,000 is a comparatively small family."

— It has been found by M. de Lacerda that permanganate of potash is very efficacious as an antidote to the poison of snakes. He experimented on dogs, injecting a one per cent. solution of the substance into the cellular tissue or into the veins, after the poison, and the usual effects of the latter were strikingly obviated. In one series of experiments the poison was allowed time to take some effect before the permanganate solution was injected, the dogs showing dilatation of the pupil, respiratory and cardiac derangements, muscular contractions, &c. Two or three minutes after the antidote was given these troubles disappeared, and after 15 to 25 minutes of some measure of prostration, the animal would be able to walk and even run about, and recover its normal aspect. The same dose of poison, not counteracted, caused death, more or less rapidly.

—Mr. J. M. Swanks' Statistics of the Iron and Steel Productions of the United States, 1881, is issued by the Census Bureau, and bears the marks of careful preparation. The historical sketch is interesting reading. The statement is made that "we are to-day the second iron-making and steel-making country in the world. In a little while we shall surpass even Great Britain in the production of steel of all kinds, as we have already surpassed her in the production of Bessemer steel and in the consumption of all iron and steel products. The year 1882 will probably witness this consummation. We are destined also to pass Great Britain in the production of pig iron.

—Under the title of "Zoölogy in the University of Tokio," Professor C. O. Whitman, late professor of zoölogy in the University of Tokio, discourses in a pamphlet of forty-four pages on the needs of a more complete endowment of a zoölogical department, and the natural advantages enjoyed by the Japanese zoölogist for the study of this science. It contains interesting facts regarding the land leech, the land planarian, the jumping fish, and other animals. Professor Whitman is at present in Naples, studying at the Zoölogical Laboratory, founded by Dr. Dohrn.

—In the Iowa Legislature, on the 20th of January last, a petition from the citizens of Pottawatomie county, and another by Messrs. Henderson and Calkins, were presented, asking for a thorough geological survey of the State. Both petitions were referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, which reported favorably on the project. Another move has been made looking toward the establishment of a Bureau of Agriculture, which shall sustain an entomologist, an office which is sadly needed.

—Queen, one of the group of elephants connected with Barnum's circus, at Bridgeport, Conn., gave birth to a baby elephant last night (February 3) at eight o'clock; weight, forty-five pounds. The other baby elephant weighed one hundred and twenty-six pounds at birth. At last reports mother and daughter were doing well.

— M. Pasteur has resolved to continue his researches into the means of preventing diseases by destroying or nullifying the virulence of the germs, and is about to visit the Bordeaux lazaretto, with a view of studying yellow fever, which he hopes to conquer by means of inoculation.

—A new and most valuable feature of the Census Reports for 1880 are the Forestry Bulletins, prepared by Mr. C. S. Sargent. Each number is accompanied by a map of some State, showing the distribution of forests, with special reference to the lumber industry.

—*Humboldt* is the title of a new monthly illustrated magazine of science in all departments, published at Stuttgart and edited by Dr. G. Krebs.

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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

Boston Society of Natural History, Jan. 18, 1882.—Mr. Wm. M. Davis discussed the classification of Lake Basins, and Mr. F. W. Putnam spoke of the use of copper and bronze by the early races of America.

Feb. 1.—Professor Henry W. Haynes gave some indications of an early race of men in New England, and Mr. F. W. Putnam showed some interesting stone implements from Marshfield, Mass.